

## INTRODUCTION

James M. Day, Director of State Archives, his Staff and the Texas State Library are to be commended for this significant contribution to the history of the Texas Confederate period.

The manuscript of the proceedings of the House for the Session was lost and this journal was reconstructed from newspaper reports and documents in the Archives. This research achievement reflects credit on Mr. Day and those who assisted in this endeavor.

Texas in the fall of 1864 was in a precarious military and economic position and this is reflected by the legislative deliberations contained herein.

Federal forces controlled the Mississippi River and by an effective river patrol system virtually sealed off the Southwest from the Capitol in Richmond and the main portion of the Confederacy. The Trans-Mississippi Department was created to administer the military, economic and civil affairs in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri and the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). However, all of Missouri and much of the other states were occupied by enemy forces which constituted a constant invasion threat to Texas.

Texas itself had Federal forces in the El Paso and Davis Mountain area and at the mouth of the Rio Grande below Brownsville. Enemy ships blockaded its coastline and fortifications and constant Confederate and State foot and horse patrols were necessary to prevent repeated attempts at landings.

Hostile Indians, bandits and deserters living as desperadoes constantly raided frontier settlers, with great loss in lives and property. A constant dispute raged between the State and the Confederacy as to the responsibility for frontier protection after the Frontier Regiment of State Troops was mustered into Confederate service and transferred elsewhere in 1864. The remaining handful of troops detailed to frontier service was unable to cope with the attacks. The Legislature was besieged with petitions and memorials demanding stronger security measures. The Legislature in turn called upon the Confederate Congress to exempt men for frontier duty.

Mexico was the only neutral foreign nation bordering the South and Texas had been the avenue whereby an impressive overland trade had developed with and through that country. Cotton, the great basis of this commerce, was hauled in ponderous ox-wagon trains for distances up to 500 miles to the Rio Grande. Most of the cotton came from Texas but some came from the other states in the Trans-Mississippi by the inland waterways and an occasional load was even smuggled through enemy lines to reach the state. The wagons returned from Mexico with vital arms, military and medical supplies and consumer goods. Some of this in turn was shipped through enemy lines to other portions of the Confederacy. Because "King Cotton" was the only acceptable product to trade, the State of Texas and the Confederate military and civil authorities actively competed for its purchase and control. This economic struggle for survival is reflected in these legislative proceedings.

In addition to these outside sources of badly needed items, the Legislature encouraged the establishment of small factories within the state, built several of its own and subsidized others by gifts of cash and land to manufacture military and necessary civilian supplies. While the number of manufacturing plants in the fall of 1864 would not be too impressive by present-day standards, it was a creditable accomplishment for that time and the Texas Legislature should be recognized for its part in making the state the "Storehouse of the Confederacy."

The Special Session was called for the primary purpose of strengthening the fiscal affairs of the state. Confederate notes and currency were greatly depreciated as were state treasury warrants. Prices were extremely high and many citizens with things to sell refused to accept payment except in specie.

United States bonds had been exchanged with the Southern government for its obligations and in addition, the state government had used special trust monies such as the school fund and the university fund to the amount of almost \$1,500,000 in an attempt to increase the financial responsibility of both the State and Confederate Treasuries. A number of the plans to alleviate these chaotic conditions were proposed in this session and the record is replete with divergent views on possible solutions.

Like all wartime legislatures, much time in the day-to-day deliberation was consumed by the concern and provisions for the families and dependents of the men in the service. Each session of the Legislature since the beginning of the war made provisions for this worthy cause.

Additional assistance was supplied in this Special Session in the form of 600,000 yards of cloth and a supply of excess thread manufactured by the state penitentiary. It was to be distributed by county commissioners courts either directly to the families involved, or to be sold by them to purchase supplies for the beneficiaries. The state penitentiary had been throughout the war the most successful of the manufacturers in the state, producing hundreds of thousands of yards of cotton and woolen cloth and uniforms. Income from this source constituted 38 percent of the state's income.

Legislative students will note with interest the many details that were handled by the Legislature that are now taken care of administratively. For example, all corporations, private clubs and organizations and schools were chartered directly with the Legislature and many matters of probate required special legislation such as removal of disabilities and change of names. Numerous claims against the state are now lumped together were handled by special bills and resolutions.

The Legislature adopted additional taxes always necessary in times of emergency. A five percent gross sales tax was levied against distilleries with a one percent income tax on gross receipts of all other businesses. An occupation tax on wholesale and retail concerns, as well as the various professions was also passed.

Confederate Texas Legislatures were in almost continuous sessions. Poor pay and inflated currency caused many members to live in tents and covered wagons on the Capitol ground and to cook over campfires.

These Journals reflect the deliberative concept of legislative business. These legislators, many of whom were prominent in business and professional affairs, approached the various crises with courage and in a statesmanlike manner. They were worthy of their distinguished forebears and set an example that has been by and large followed by their successors.

The volumes containing the House and Senate Journals

published by the Texas State Library and edited by James M. Day during the Texas Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965, are valuable Texana additions to a period too long neglected by historians. Over 200 other books have been published or reprinted during this period and much has been done to correct greatly misunderstood concept of Texas' part and place in the Civil War.

These literary contributions, coupled with a farsighted legislative program administered by the Texas State Historical Survey Committee to erect Official Texas Historical Markers commemorating wartime events and scenes of accomplishment, have provided the state with a constructive and dignified observance of the Centennial period.

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